

Message Text

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SUBJECT:MAQARIN DAM CONSULTATIONS - NEXT STEPS

REF: (A) TEL AVIV 942; (B) AMMAN 887; (C) AMMAN 810;
(D) AMMAN 1333

1. SUMMARY: ON FEBRUARY 28, OMAR ABDULLAH DOKHGAN
PRESIDENT, JORDAN VALLEY COMMISSION, MET WITH AID/W
OFFICIALS TO DISCUSS STATUS OF HARZA FEASIBILITY STUDY ON
MAQARIN DAM PROJECT AND TO COMMENT FORMALLY ON FIVE AREAS
OF CONCERN EXPRESSED BY THE ISRAELIS WITH RESPECT TO
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PROJECT, I.E., WATER AVAILABILITY, FLOW AND QUALITY,
ECOLOGY AND ENVIRONMENT, PALESTINE ELECTRIC POWER
CONCESSION, AND THE WEST BANK. OVERALL, ABDULLAH DID NOT
FEEL THAT PROCEEDING WITH MAQARIN DAM PROJECT WILL IN ANY
WAY BE DETRIMENTAL TO GOI SINCE YARMOUK WATER WILL BE
AVAILABLE TO ISRAEL IN ADEQUATE QUANTITIES, ITS QUALITY
WOULD BE SOMEWHAT IMPROVED, DRY SEASON FLOW COULD BE
SATISFIED, AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT WOULD BE MINIMAL.
HOWEVER, ABDULLAH EMPHASIZED THAT SUCH ISSUES AS SPECIFIC
VOLUME OF WATER TO BE ALLOCATED FOR ISRAEL'S USE IN YARMOUK

TRIANGLE, PLUS WATER RIGHTS QUESTIONS PERTAINING TO THE PALESTINE ELECTRIC POWER CONCESSION AND THE WEST BANK, WOULD HAVE TO BE ADDRESSED IN CONTENT OF A MIDDLE EAST POLITICAL SETTLEMENT. ABDULLAH AGREED THAT HIS COMMENTS

FROM GOI DATA RE IMPACT ON EAST GHOR CANAL AND ISRAELI NATIONAL WATER CARRIER ON DEAD SEA LEVEL, AS WELL AS ISRAELI VIEWS ON USE OF DIVERSION DAM AT ADASIYE FOR CONVEYING WATER TO EAST GHOR CANAL.

2. IN PURSUING OUR INFORMAL GOOD OFFICES ROLE OF FACILITATING EXCHANGE OF VIEWS AND TECHNICAL INFORMATION BETWEEN THE PARTIES ON THIS ISSUE, WE ENVISAGE HOLDING ANOTHER MEETING BETWEEN AID AND ISRAELI TECHNICAL EXPERTS IN ORDER TO BRIEF LATTER ON GOJ'S COMMENTS AND ELICIT FURTHER ISRAELI REACTIONS. WE WILL AWAIT AMMAN AND TEL AVIV COMMENTS, INCLUDING ANY NECESSARY FOLLOW-UP WITH CROWN PRINCE HASSAN AS SUGGESTED REF D. END SUMMARY.

3. ON FEBRUARY 28, OMAR ABDULLAH DOKHGAN, PRESIDENT, JORDAN VALLEY COMMISSION, MET WITH SELIG A. TAUBENBLATT, DEPUTY DIRECTOR, NE/CD, AND JAMES SHEA, NE/CD, TO DISCUSS PRESENT STATUS HARZA FEASIBILITY STUDY AND CONVEY GOJ'S OFFICIAL REACTION TO THE FIVE AREAS OF CONCERN RAISED BY ISRAEL WITH U.S. TECHNICAL TEAM IN JERUSALEM ON FEBRUARY 6 (REF A) AND LATER CONVEYED BY THE U.S. TEAM TO GOJ ON FEBRUARY 12 AND 13 IN AMMAN (REF B). HE ALSO MET WITH CONFIDENTIAL

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ALFRED D. WHITE, AID/DAA/NE, TO DISCUSS THE GOJ'S REACTION TO GOI CONCERNS. ABDULLAH, WHO HAD SPENT PREVIOUS WEEK IN CHICAGO TALKING TO HARZA AND REVIEWING ITS DRAFT REPORT, HAD CONCLUDED THAT HARZA NEEDS TO DO MORE WORK ON THE REPORT IN TERMS OF EVALUATING ADDITIONAL OPTIONS FOR THE MAQARIN DAM'S HEIGHT AND COST, TOGETHER WITH RELATED ECONOMIC ANALYSIS. HE ENVISAGED TIMETABLE FOR HARZA'S COMPLETION OF A FINAL DRAFT FEASIBILITY STUDY AS BEING AROUND MID-APRIL, WITH A POSSIBLE MEETING OF HARZA, JVC, AID AND IBRD TO REVIEW THE REPORT AT END-APRIL.

4. ABDULLAH SAID HE HAD DISCUSSED THE FIVE AREAS OF CONCERN RAISED BY GOI WITH PRIME MINISTER BADRAN PRIOR TO HIS DEPARTURE FOR U.S. HE NOTED THAT HIS COMMENTS (SEE BELOW) ON THE ISRAELI QUESTIONS REPRESENTED A FORMAL GOJ POSITION WHICH COULD BE CONVEYED TO THE GOI. WHEN ASKED WHETHER GOJ HAD FORMED A TASK GROUP AS NOTED IN AMBASSADOR PICKERING'S FEBRUARY 13 CONVERSATION WITH CROWN PRINCE HASSAN (REF B), ABDULLAH SAID THAT NO FORMAL GROUP HAD BEEN ESTABLISHED, BUT THAT HE HAD COORDINATED GOJ COMMENTS ON ISRAELI CONCERNS WITH NATIONAL PLANNING COUNCIL PRESIDENT HANNA ODEH.

5. OVERALL, ABDULLAH'S COMMENTS WERE VERY SIMILAR TO THE INITIAL REACTIONS HE CONVEYED TO TAUBENBLATT DURING THEIR FEBRUARY 12 MEETING IN JORDAN (REF B). HE REITERATED THAT

HE RECOGNIZES NEED FOR SOME FORM OF COOPERATION BETWEEN JORDAN AND ISRAEL AS THE MAQARIN DAM/YARMOUK RIVER PROJECT

PROCEEDS. HE DID NOT BELIEVE THAT BUILDING MAQARIN DAM WOULD IN ANY WAY BE DETRIMENTAL TO ISRAEL EVEN AFTER COMPLETION SINCE YARMOUK WATER WILL BE AVAILABLE IN ADEQUATE QUANTITIES, ITS QUALITY WOULD BE SOMEWHAT IMPROVED, AND ITS DOWNSTREAM FLOW DURING DRY SUMMER MONTHS COULD BE REGULATED TO MEET ISRAELI REQUIREMENTS. HOWEVER, ON THE QUESTIONS OF SPECIFIC VOLUME OF WATER FOR THE YARMOUK TRIANGLE, PALESTINE ELECTRIC POWER CORPORATION CONCESSION, AND ALLOCATIONS FOR THE WEST BANK, CONFIDENTIAL

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ABDULLAH EMPHASIZED THAT THESE AREAS WOULD HAVE TO BE ADDRESSED IN CONTEXT OF AN OVERALL MIDDLE EAST POLITICAL SETTLEMENT.

6. FOLLOWING ARE ABDULLAH'S DETAILED COMMENTS ON ISRAEL'S FIVE CONCERNS, WHICH HE AGREED WE COULD CONVEY TO THE ISRAELIS:

A. WATER AVAILABILITY - UNTIL COMPLETION OF MAQARIN DAM SEVERAL YEARS HENCE, YARMOUK WATER WILL BE AVAILABLE AT CURRENT LEVELS (AT LEAST) FOR ISRAELI USE IN YARMOUK TRIANGLE. EVEN AFTER MAQARIN DAM CONSTRUCTED, SUFFICIENT WATER SHOULD BE AVAILABLE FOR USE IN YARMOUK TRIANGLE, SINCE YARMOUK RIVER TRIBUTARIES BELOW MAQARIN DAM (E.G., WADI RAQQAD AND OTHER STREAMS) WILL CONTINUE TO FLOW UN-INTERRUPTED INTO THE TRIANGLE. ABDULLAH SAID THAT REGARDLESS OF WHAT FIGURE SHOULD BE REGARDED AS REPRESENTING PROPER ALLOCATION OF YARMOUK RIVER WATER TO YARMOUK TRIANGLE (E.G., 17 MCM INCLUDED IN HARZA STUDY OR 25 MCM AS ENVISAGED IN JOHNSTON PLAN), CONSIDERABLY MORE THAN 25 MCM OF SUCH WATER WILL BE AVAILABLE TO THE TRIANGLE AT LEAST UNTIL SECOND DAM/RESERVOIR CONSTRUCTED. HE NOTED THAT ISRAELIS WILL BE PUMPING UP TO A REPORTED 40 MCM FROM THE NAHARAYAN RESERVOIR INTO LAKE TIBERIAS, FOR USE OVER AND ABOVE PRESENT YARMOUK TRIANGLE USAGE. HE EMPHASIZED THAT GOJ DID NOT WISH NEGOTIATE PRECISE YARMOUK TRIANGLE ALLOCATION AT THIS TIME BUT WISHES TO DEFER THIS ISSUE FOR RESOLUTION IN CONTEXT OF SOME FUTURE ARAB-ISRAELI POLITICAL SETTLEMENT. HE AGAIN MENTIONED THAT, ULTIMATELY, 40 MCM REQUIREMENT FOR YARMOUK TRIANGLE COULD EASILY BE SATISFIED IF BOTH YARMOUK RIVER AND LAKE TIBERIAS WATERS WERE CONSIDERED AS TRIANGLE SOURCES.

B. FLOW AND QUALITY - WITH RESPECT TO YARMOUK RIVER'S FLOW DURING DRY SEASON, ABDULLAH BELIEVED THERE SHOULD BE CONFIDENTIAL

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LITTLE PROBLEM IN RESOLVING THIS ISSUE. HE INDICATED THAT HARZA WOULD LOOK AT DESIGN OF A DIVERSION DAM AT EAST GHOR CANAL INTAKE WHICH WOULD PROVIDE CONTINUOUS FLOW OF WATER TO YARMOUK TRIANGLE. HE FELT THIS WAS BEST METHOD OF

PROVIDING FOR YARMOUK FLOW TO TRIANGLE. ABDULLAH WILL ALSO ASK HARZA TO PREPARE SEPARATE REVIEW OF ESTIMATED MONTH-BY-MONTH FLOW BASED ON YARMOUK WATER AVAILABILITY (ONCE MAQARIN DAM STORAGE RESERVOIR COMPLETED) WHICH COULD BE MADE AVAILABLE TO ISRAEL. WITH RESPECT TO WATER QUALITY, ABDULLAH FELT THAT QUALITY SHOULD IMPROVE ONCE MAQARIN DAM/RESERVOIR COMPLETED, SINCE WHAT IS NOW REASONABLY GOOD QUALITY BASE FLOW WILL BE MIXED WITH BETTER QUALITY WATER STORED IN MAQARIN RESERVOIR. THUS, QUALITY SHOULD BE BETTER DURING MORE MONTHS OF THE YEAR, INCLUDING BETTER QUALITY FOR YARMOUK TRIANGLE. HARZA WILL BE ASKED TO REVIEW QUALITY QUESTION, AND ITS FINDINGS WOULD ALSO BE MADE AVAILABLE TO GOI.

C. ECOLOGY AND ENVIRONMENT - ABDULLAH FELT THAT THE MAQARIN DAM PROJECT WOULD HAVE A MINIMAL IMPACT ON JORDAN RIVER AND DEAD SEA LEVELS. HE APPRECIATED, HOWEVER, AID REQUIREMENTS TO ADDRESS ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS AND OUR NEED TO SATISFY ANY CONCERNS THAT MIGHT BE RAISED BY ENVIRONMENTAL GROUPS. ABDULLAH ENCOURAGED US TO PROCEED WITH U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY (USGS) RECONNAISSANCE ON JORDAN RIVER/DEAD SEA WITH POSSIBLE FOLLOW-ON ENVIRONMENTAL STUDY THAT WOULD ADDRESS ANY POTENTIAL SHORT AND LONG-TERM PROBLEMS. HE PREFERRED SUCH A STUDY BE UNDERTAKEN FOR GOJ ALONE, INSTEAD OF BEING A JOINT JORDANIAN-ISRAELI STUDY, BECAUSE OF LATTER'S POLITICAL IMPLICATIONS. HE SAW NO PROBLEM, HOWEVER, IN USGS CONSULTING WITH ISRAEL, AS LONG AS GOJ DOES NOT HAVE TO PAY FOR SUCH CONSULTING COSTS. FYI: AID/W IS CURRENTLY DISCUSSING WITH USGS SCOPE OF WORK FOR JORDAN RIVER/DEAD SEA RECONNAISSANCE AND WILL KEEP ADDRESSEES CONFIDENTIAL

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INFORMED. END FYI.

D. PALESTINE ELECTRIC POWER CORPORATION (PEPC) CONCESSION - ABDULLAH BELIEVED THIS ISSUE COULD ONLY BE ADDRESSED IN CONTEXT OF A FUTURE ARAB-ISRAELI POLITICAL SETTLEMENT. HE INDICATED HE HAD NOT HAD TIME TO STUDY LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OF PEPC CONCESSION, OTHER THAN BEING AWARE THAT THE CONCESSION HAD BEEN CANCELLED BY JORDAN. ABDULLAH DID NOT SEE THIS ISSUE AS ONE THAT HAD TO BE RESOLVED IN SHORT RUN. FYI: ABDULLAH NOTED THAT QUESTION OF ISRAELI HYDROELECTRIC RIGHTS WITH RESPECT TO GENERATING FACILITIES ON YARMOUK RIVER MAY BE ACADEMIC,

SINCE HARZA MAY CONCLUDE THAT HYDRO POWER AS PART OF MAQARIN DAM/YARMOUK RIVER PROJECT MAY BE UNECONOMIC AND THUS OUGHT NOT TO BE INCLUDED IN STAGE 2 OF THE PROJECT. END FYI. ABDULLAH NOTED THAT THIS PROBLEM HAS EXISTED SINCE 1948, THAT JORDAN DOES NOT WISH TO DEAL WITH RIGHTS OF CONCESSIONARY PARTIES AT THIS TIME, AND THAT ITS

RESOLUTION MUST BE ADDRESSED IN CONTEXT OF FUTURE POLITICAL SETTLEMENT. FYI: ABDULLAH SUGGESTED THAT SUCH RESOLUTION WOULD ENTAIL, AT MOST, PAYMENT OF COMPENSATION TO PARTY(S) WHO MAY HAVE BEEN DAMAGED AS A RESULT OF CONCESSION CANCELLATION BY JORDAN--NOTHING MORE. PROFESSOR BAXTER IS COMPLETING A STUDY OF LEGAL ASPECTS OF PALESTINE POWER CONCESSION, AND THIS WILL BE AVAILABLE TO US SHORTLY. END FYI.

E. THE WEST BANK - ABDULLAH EMPHASIZED THAT AS LONG AS THE FUTURE STATUS OF THE WEST BANK REMAINS UNDETERMINED, QUESTION OF YARMOUK WATER AVAILABILITY FOR THAT AREA MUST BE LEFT IN ABEYANCE. HE BELIEVED THIS ISSUE TOO WOULD HAVE TO BE ADDRESSED IN CONTEXT OF A FUTURE ARAB-ISRAELI POLITICAL SETTLEMENT. HE NOTED, HOWEVER, THAT BASED ON PRESENT HARZA STUDIES, ADEQUATE QUANTITIES OF YARMOUK WATER WOULD BE AVAILABLE FOR WEST BANK USE, EVEN ON A CONFIDENTIAL

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SEASONAL BASIS, AND THAT POSSIBLE FUTURE HEIGHTENING OF MAQARIN DAM AND CONSTRUCTION OF A SECOND DAM/ RESERVOIR DOWNSTREAM ON YARMOUK RIVER (I.E., AT MUKHEIBA) WOULD ENHANCE THIS PROSPECT FURTHER. (THE FINANCING AND ALLOCATION OF COSTS FOR SUCH FUTURE CONSTRUCTION, ABDULLAH NOTED, COULD ONLY BE WORKED OUT AFTER FUTURE DISPOSITION OF THE WEST BANK HAD BEEN DETERMINED.) ABDULLAH ALSO OBSERVED THAT OTHER NATURAL SOURCES OF WATER FOR WEST BANK ARE GROUNDWATER AND WATER FROM LAKE TIBERIAS, BOTH OF WHICH WOULD HAVE TO BE TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT WHEN ASSESSING WEST BANK RIGHTS TO YARMOUK WATER IN THE FUTURE. IN SUM, HE FELT MAQARIN DAM'S IMPACT ON WEST BANK WATER RIGHTS WOULD NOT HINGE AS MUCH ON WATER AVAILABILITY, BUT RATHER ON THE ENGINEERING PROBLEM OF HOW BEST TO DELIVER TIBERIAS AND YARMOUK WATER TO WEST BANK.

7. GOJ/HARZA TECHNICAL DATA REQUIREMENTS - TAUBENBLATT REMINDED ABDULLAH THAT ISRAELIS HAVE OFFERED TO PROVIDE TECHNICAL DATA TO GOJ/HARZA, BUT THAT THEY REQUIRED SPECIFIC INDICATIONS OF KIND OF INFO NEEDED BY GOJ/HARZA. ABDULLAH SAID HE HAD RAISED THIS SUBJECT WITH HARZA IN CHICAGO, ONLY TO BE TOLD THAT HARZA HAS SUFFICIENT DATA ON AREA PRECIPITATION, WATER FLOWS, ETC. ABDULLAH DOUBTED ISRAELIS COULD IMPROVE ON DATA AVAILABLE TO GOJ/HARZA, SINCE GOJ HAS MEASURING AND GAUGING STATIONS LOCATED AT

MAQARIN AND ADASIYE. TAUBENBLATT ASKED ABDULLAH WHETHER HE WAS INTERESTED IN ISRAELI FIGURES ON CURRENT WATER UTILIZATION BY VILLAGES IN YARMOUK TRIANGLE, TO WHICH ABDULLAH RESPONDED THAT GOJ IS ONLY CONCERNED ABOUT TOTAL QUANTITY TO BE DELIVERED TO THE TRIANGLE AND NOT HOW ISRAELIS DISTRIBUTE SUCH WATER AFTER IT IS TAKEN FROM

YARMOUK RIVER. ABDULLAH DID REQUEST, HOWEVER, THAT U.S. OBTAIN FOLLOWING INFO FROM THE ISRAELIS:

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A. ANY STUDIES/DATA THAT ISRAELIS MAY HAVE RELATING TO IMPACT OF JORDAN'S EAST GHOR MAIN CANAL AND ISRAEL'S NATIONAL WATER CARRIER ON DEAD SEA LEVEL, SINCE BOTH PROJECTS HAVE BEEN IN BEING FOR A NUMBER OF YEARS NOW.

B. GOI VIEW ON MAQARIN DAM/YARMOUK RIVER DIVERSION SCHEME SET FORTH IN HARZA INTERIM REPORT, I.E., DIVERSION TO EAST GHOR CANAL AT ADASIYE EITHER BY DAM OR DROP INLET. ABDULLAH BELIEVES IT IMPORTANT TO HAVE ISRAELI COMMENT/ REACTIONS SOONEST SO THAT HARZA CAN TAKE THEM INTO ACCOUNT IN ITS FINAL FEASIBILITY STUDY. FYI: SINCE DIVERSION SCHEME COULD AFFECT HEIGHT OF MAQARIN DAM, THIS ISSUE SHOULD BE ADDRESSED SOONEST. END FYI.

8. HARZA'S DRAFT FINAL FEASIBILITY STUDY (TO BE AVAILABLE ABOUT MID-APRIL) WILL PROVIDE CONSIDERABLY MORE DATA THAN HARZA'S INTERIM REPORT AND WILL PERMIT US TO FOCUS ON SUCH ISSUES AS WATER AVAILABILITY, CONVEYANCE OPTIONS, QUALITY, FLOWS, ETC. ABDULLAH SAID GOJ WOULD HAVE NO OBJECTION IF HARZA'S FINAL DRAFT STUDY WERE MADE AVAILABLE TO ISRAELIS AT SAME TIME IT IS BEING MADE AVAILABLE TO USG AND OTHER POSSIBLE DONORS (E.G., WORLD BANK).

9. IN MEANTIME, IN PURSUING OUR INFORMAL GOOD OFFICES ROLE TO FACILITATE EXCHANGE OF TECHNICAL INFORMATION AND HELP RESOLVE ANY DIFFERENCES THAT MAY ARISE BETWEEN JORDAN AND ISRAEL OVER THE MAQARIN DAM PROJECT, OUR NEXT STEP SHOULD BE TO CONVEY FOREGOING JORDANIAN COMMENTS TO GOI AND ELICIT ISRAELI REACTIONS THERETO. (WE WOULD HOPE THIS WILL SERVE TO CLARIFY AND NARROW THE ISSUES FURTHER.) IN CONVEYING TO GOI ABDULLAH'S REMARKS ABOUT DEFERRING SUCH ISSUES AS YARMOUK TRIANGLE, WEST BANK WATER ALLOCATIONS AND PEPC CONCESSION FOR RESOLUTION IN CONTEXT OF FUTURE POLITICAL SETTLEMENT, WE WOULD APPRECIATE TEL AVIV'S COMMENTS WHETHER DEFERMENT SUCH ISSUES UNTIL AFTER SETTLEMENT WOULD CREATE ANY PROBLEMS FOR

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ISRAELIS.

10. IN CONSIDERING AN EARLY APPROACH TO THE ISRAELIS TO BRIEF THEM ON JORDANIAN RESPONSES, WE UNDERSTAND THAT MENACHEM KANTOR, ISRAELI WATER COMMISSIONER, PLANS TO VISIT U.S. IN LATE MARCH. KANTOR'S PRESENCE IN WASHINGTON WOULD GIVE US THE OPPORTUNITY TO REVIEW GOJ'S COMMENTS WITH HIM AND SEEK GOI REACTIONS. IF NECESSARY, KANTOR COULD BE JOINED BY APPROPRIATE OFFICIAL OF MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS (MFA) AT SUCH MEETING.

ALTERNATIVELY, TAUBENBLATT COULD RETURN TO ISRAEL IN LATE MARCH TO CONVEY GOJ RESPONSE AND FOR FURTHER DISCUSSIONS WITH ISRAELI EXPERTS. IF NECESSARY, TAUBENBLATT COULD AGAIN VISIT AMMAN FOR NECESSARY BRIEFING OF AMBASSADOR AND TO PASS ON RESULTS OF HIS TALKS IN ISRAEL.

11. WOULD APPRECIATE EARLY ADDRESSEE COMMENTS/ SUGGESTIONS ON FOREGOING, INCLUDING ANY NECESSARY FOLLOW-UP BY AMMAN WITH CROWN PRINCE HASSAN (PER REF D), SO WE CAN MORE READILY DECIDE HOW BEST TO PROCEED WITH NEXT STEPS ON THIS MATTER.
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